



## Joint News Release

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### Joint Public Relations Team

**1:40 p.m., December 19, 2009**

**Primary Contact:** Jim Westhoff cell (302) 345-5877 - for updates on road conditions throughout the weekend, call Jim at this number.

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## **Crews work to keep up with heavy snowfall**

*Winds throughout day likely to cause blizzard conditions*

As heavy snow continues to blanket the entire state, agencies are working hard to keep the primary roads passable, and tending to stranded motorists. Additionally, Governor Jack Markell has declared a State of Emergency for New Castle and Kent counties effective at 3:00 pm today. All non-emergency vehicles are strongly encouraged to remain off Delaware roads in those counties. This State of Emergency does not yet extend to Sussex County, though state safety and transportation officials are encouraging motorists in Sussex to stay off the roads as well unless absolutely necessary.

Crews from Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT) have been on the road since the early morning hours. The plows and other vehicles are being deployed to the primary roads. With the heavy snowfall, crews have to cover the same stretch of road repeatedly, so that the surface will remain passable for traffic.

Passable means that as long as it is driven slowly and carefully, a vehicle should be able to drive on the surface. However, passable does not mean clear. Motorists should use extreme caution if they absolutely must drive on the roads. Many secondary roads in Delaware are not passable, because they have yet to be plowed. Additionally, many of them have more than 10 inches of snow.

The latest weather update provided to state officials shows that winds will intensify as the storm progresses throughout the day, and 20 to 25 mph with higher gusts will occur. High winds with heavy snowfall at times will result in blizzard conditions and white-out periods during the afternoon to evening hours. Storm totals will vary from 12 to 20 inches statewide with the coastal areas of Sussex County expecting 7 – 8 inches.

The Office of Highway Safety reminds motorists that high gusting winds make driving particularly difficult for higher profile vehicles such as trucks, vans, and SUV's. The winds may push drivers out of their lane into someone else's. Those who absolutely must drive today should first make sure to clear off the roof and hood of

their vehicle, not just the windshield. The high winds will blow the snow off your vehicle toward other vehicles potentially scaring them and causing them to lose control.

The Delaware State Police (DSP) reports that there have been as many as 30 crashes since midnight, with three of them resulting in injuries, but so far, none of the injuries are life threatening. There have been 11 crashes in Sussex County, 19 in New Castle and none in Kent that State Police have investigated. State Police also advise that all lanes of I-95 in the area of Rt. 141 are now open again after a crash involving a jack-knifed tractor trailer has been cleared.

Sussex County is experiencing some flooding in the back bay areas in Oak Orchard, and Rt. 1 near the Indian River Inlet Bridge is experiencing water in the northbound right lane with some blowing sand.

Here are some transportation updates to take note of: The Cape May Lewis Ferry suspended operations at approximately 12:45 pm., the Delaware Memorial Bridge is restricted vehicle speeds to 25 mph. and Delaware Transit Corporations will be halting operations as early as 6 p.m. this evening. Paratransit services will only be doing dialysis runs after the State of Emergency takes effect.

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